

My Free Catechism

Book Three: The Commandments

By Mr. Romeo Maria del Santo Niño, O.P.

Nihil Obstat:

Reverend Kevin J. Bobbin
Ad hoc Censor Librorum

Imprimatur:

Most Reverend Alfred A. Schlert
Bishop of Allentown

The *Nihil Obstat* and the *Imprimatur* are a declaration that a book or pamphlet is considered to be free from doctrinal or moral error. It is not implied that those who have granted the *Nihil Obstat* or *Imprimatur* agree with the contents, opinions, or statements expressed therein.

Given this 16th day of September, 2020 at the Chancery of the Diocese of Allentown.



Reverend Eugene P. Ritz
Chancellor

Alfred A. Schlert

Most Reverend Alfred A. Schlert
Bishop of Allentown

IMPORTANT NOTICE!

This catechism is intended for educational, home use. It is copyrighted, but FREE. You may freely copy and distribute each book of this catechism to friends and family, provided the entire book (not portions or parts of it) is copied and distributed, no alteration is made, and this notice is kept intact. The sale of this catechism is strictly prohibited.

This catechism is intended as a supplementary learning material for children in the upper grades, but is substantial enough to be usable also by young adults and the general public. It also aims to serve as a free resource for many average Catholics who need to learn or review what the Catholic faith teaches, but who have no time nor endurance to read the voluminous and theologically precise *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

This catechism is divided into four books; namely, Book One: *The Apostle's Creed*, Book Two: *The Sacraments*, Book Three: *The Commandments*, and Book Four: *Prayer and Christian Perfection*. The books are available in the form of pdf files that may be copied, shared, printed on paper or uploaded to children's mobile devices, iPods or computer tablets.

I did not write this catechism from scratch. To save time I made use of the questions and answers from old catechisms in the public domain, particularly the *Catechism of St. Pius X*. However, I edited, expanded and updated many of the texts to reflect current Church teachings. Color texts and illustrations, which are missing in old catechisms, were added to make the book attractive to young readers.

Many of the pictures used here are also in the public domain here in the U.S., but there are a few copyrighted ones that I took the liberty of using based on the concept of "fair use," as defined by Title 17, U.S. Code §107, for educational and non-commercial purposes. Picture credits and a link to their sources and license (when available) are given at the end of the book.

External references in the texts, such as references to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC) or to the *1983 Code of Canon Law* (CIC), are added mainly for the use of parents or teachers who are coaching the children in learning this catechism. However, it is hoped that through the reading of select paragraphs of the CCC, many will be encouraged to read the entire book and profit from its wealth of wisdom.

Biblical texts used in this catechism are mostly from the *Douay-Challoner Rheims* version which, because they are in the public domain, I have edited slightly just to make the English less archaic for contemporary readers. The final texts may be compared with the original text of the *Douay-Challoner-Rheims* version (link below).

Although I made this book as a lay Dominican, this book is my personal project and not the project of the Lay Fraternities of St. Dominic. Therefore, the ideas expressed are mine alone and do not represent the endorsement or position of the Lay Fraternities of St. Dominic or the Order of Preachers as a whole.

USEFUL LINKS

Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC):

http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_INDEX.HTM

1983 Code of Canon Law (CIC – comes from the Latin title *Codex Iuris Canonici*)

http://www.vatican.va/archive/cod-iuris-canonici/cic_index_en.html

Anecdotes and Examples Illustrating the Catholic Catechism

<https://archive.org/details/AnecdotesAndExamplesIllustrating/page/n5/mode/2up>

Douay-Challoner-Rheims Bible (public domain)

<http://www.drbo.org/index.htm>



Fig 3 The Holy Family
Artist: Bartolomé Esteban Murillo (1617-1682)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

(Click the Title to go directly to each Topic.)

The Commandments of God and of the Church

Lesson 1 The First Commandment

Lesson 2 The Second Commandment

Lesson 3 The Third Commandment

Lesson 4 The Fourth Commandment

Lesson 5 The Fifth Commandment

Lesson 6 The Sixth Commandment

Lesson 7 The Seventh Commandment

Lesson 8 The Eighth Commandment

Lesson 9 The Ninth Commandment

Lesson 10 The Tenth Commandment

Lesson 11 The Precepts of the Church

Picture Credits / Sources

PART 3 THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD AND OF THE CHURCH

THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD IN GENERAL

1. What is treated of in the third part of this catechism?

The third part of this catechism (Book Three) treats of the Commandments of God and those of the Church.

2. How many commandments of God are there?

God has given Ten Commandments, collectively called the *Decalogue*. Here are the Ten Commandments of God (Ex 20:1-17; Deut 5:6-22):

I am the Lord thy God:

1. Thou shalt not have strange gods before Me;
2. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain;
3. Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day;
4. Honor thy father and thy mother,
5. Thou shalt not kill;
6. Thou shalt not commit adultery;
7. Thou shalt not steal;
8. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor;
9. Thou shalt not covet another's wife;
10. Thou shalt not covet another's goods.

3. Why are the Ten Commandments of God called the Decalogue?

The word "Decalogue" means "ten words." The Ten Commandments of God are called the Decalogue because God, aside from having stamped them on the soul of every man, also promulgated them in the form of ten words engraved by His own finger on two tables of stone in Mount Sinai (Ex 31:18).

4. Which are the commandments in the first table of stone?

The commandments in the first table are the first three, which pertain to the love of God and our duties toward Him.

5. Which are the commandments in the second table of stone?

The commandments in the second table are the last seven, which pertain to the love of neighbor and our duties toward him. (CCC 2067)



Fig 3.0.1 Moses Carrying the Two Tables of Stone where the Ten Commandments Were Written On (Deut 4:13)

6. Which is the chief and greatest commandment?

The chief and greatest commandment is the **love of God**: “You shall love the Lord your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with your whole mind and with your whole strength” (Mark 12:30). In the Decalogue the first three commandments, 1, 2 and 3, are all summed up in the command to love God above all things.

7. What is the second greatest commandment?

The second greatest commandment is the **love of our neighbor**: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Mark 12:31). The rest of the commandments, 4 thru 10, are all summed up in the command to love our neighbor. Our Lord Jesus Christ gave us an example of how to love our neighbor in the “Story of the Good Samaritan” (Luke 10:25-37).

8. Is it then possible to summarize the Ten Commandments?

Yes, the Ten Commandments may be summarized into just these two: *love God above all things* and *love your neighbor as yourself*.

9. Are we bound to observe all the commandments?

Yes, we are bound to observe all the commandments (CCC 2068) because we are bound to live according to the will of God who created us, and because a serious transgression against even one of them is enough to merit hell.

10. Is it possible for any person to observe all the commandments?

Yes, it is possible to observe all of God’s commandments, because God never commands anything that we cannot fulfill, and because He gives grace to observe them to those who ask it as they should. In the Bible we see Zachary and Elizabeth as examples of people who observed all the commandments: “They were both just before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord without blame” (Luke 1:6).

11. What, in a general way, should we consider in each of the commandments?

In each of the commandments we should consider its positive part and its negative part, that is, what it commands and what it forbids.

12. Why is it said at the beginning of the Ten Commandments, “I am the Lord thy God”?

It is said at the beginning of the Ten Commandments: “I am the Lord thy God,” to show us that God our Creator is the one who gives these commandments, and that we, being His creatures, are bound to obey them.

SINS

13. What is sin?

Sin is an offense against God. Any act against the will of God, or any act of disobedience against Him, is a sin. (CCC 1849-1850)

14. How many kinds of sin are there?

There are two kinds of sin: *original sin* and *actual sin*.

Original sin is the sin in which we are all born, and which we contracted just by being descendants of disobedient first parents, Adam and Eve.

Actual sin is that which man, after coming to the use of reason, commits of his own free will.

15. What evil effects has the sin of Adam and Eve brought upon us?

The evil effects of the sin of Adam and Eve are: The privation of grace, the loss of Paradise, together with ignorance, inclination to evil, death, sickness and all our other miseries.



Fig 3.0.2 Adam and Eve Expelled from Paradise

16. How is original sin cancelled?
Original sin is cancelled by Baptism.

17. How many kinds of actual sin are there?

There are two kinds of actual sin: *mortal* and *venial*. **Mortal** sins are big sins; **venial** sins are small sins. (CCC 1854)

18. What is mortal sin?

Mortal sin is the destruction of charity in the heart, by seriously failing in our duties toward God, toward our neighbor, or toward ourselves. (CCC 1855)

19. Why is it called mortal?

It is called mortal (from the Latin *mors*, which means death) because it brings death on the soul by making it lose sanctifying grace which is the life of the soul, just as the soul itself is the life of the body.

20. What injury does mortal sin do the soul?

- a) Mortal sin deprives the soul of grace and makes it lose Heaven and the friendship of God;
- b) It deprives it of merits already acquired, and renders it incapable of acquiring new merits;
- c) It makes it the slave of the devil;
- d) It makes it deserve hell as well as the chastisements of this life.

21. What is required to constitute a mortal sin?

To constitute a mortal sin, three things are required (CCC 1857-1861):

- a) It must be about a serious or *grave matter*;
- b) There must be *full knowledge* or full consciousness of the gravity of the matter;
- c) There must be *full consent*; that means, there must be a deliberate will to commit the sin.

When any of the above conditions is missing, then the sin is a venial sin. (CCC 1862)

22. What is venial sin?

Venial sin does not totally destroy charity in the heart, but wounds it by slightly failing in some duty toward God, toward our neighbor, or toward ourselves. (CCC 1855) It is called venial because:

- a) It is not serious compared with mortal sin;
- b) It does not deprive us of divine grace; and
- c) God more readily pardons us.

23. What harm does venial sin do the soul?

Venial sin: (1) Weakens and chills charity in us; (2) Disposes us to mortal sin; (3) Renders us deserving of temporal punishments both in this world and in the next.

24. Are all mortal sins equally bad?

No, some mortal sins are more grievous than others, such as the “blasphemies against the Holy Spirit” and the “sins that cry out to God for vengeance.”

25. Which are the “blasphemies against the Holy Spirit”?

The blasphemies against the Holy Spirit are these six:
 (1) Despairing of being saved; (2) Presuming on being saved without merit; (3) Opposing the known truth; (4) Envyng another's spiritual goods; (5) Obstinate remaining in sin; and finally, (6) Final impenitence. (CCC 1864)

Despair of being saved – is the lack of confidence in God's mercy. It is the sin of Cain who said, “Oh, my sin is too great to be forgiven” (Gen 4:13).

Presumption of being saved without merit – is an over-confidence in God's mercy that one can be saved without contrition and without doing good works. Those who disbelieve in hell on the excuse that God is all merciful also commit the same mistake.

Opposing the known truths – is obstinacy in refusing to accept the truth, especially truths of faith. This is committed especially by those who persist in their unbelief or heresy.

Envy another's spiritual goods – is a sadness in seeing another person grow in virtue and perfection, because it reminds them of their foolish disregard of their own soul.

Obstinately remaining in sin – is a willful persistence in wickedness even after sufficient instruction and admonition.

Final impenitence – is to die without contrition or repentance of one's sins. Those who live through life disregarding God and His laws often die impenitent.

26. Why are these sins said to be against the Holy Spirit?

These sins are said to be against the Holy Spirit because they are committed through pure malice, which is contrary to goodness, which is the special attribute of the Holy Spirit.

27. Which are the “sins that cry to God for vengeance”?

The “sins that cry to God for vengeance” are these: (1) Willful murder (including abortion); (2) The sin of sodomy (unnatural sexual acts, including homosexual acts, which by nature cannot result in the production of an offspring); (3) Oppression of the poor; (4) Defrauding laborers of their wages. (CCC 1867)

28. Why are these sins said to cry to God for vengeance?

These sins are said to cry to God for vengeance because the Bible says so, and because their iniquity is so great and so manifest that it provokes God to punish them with the severest chastisements. For example, God destroyed the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 19:24) because of the lust and unnatural behavior of their inhabitants (Jude 1:7), after whom their sin was later named “sodomy.”

29. Are there biblical texts proving that the four sins cited above really cry out to God for vengeance?

Yes, there are, for that is how we know them.

- a.) **Willful murder** – the unjust taking away of another person’s life. In the book of *Genesis*, which records the murder committed by Cain against Abel, God spoke to Cain and said, “What have you done? the voice of your brother's blood cries to Me from the earth” (Gen 4:10).
- b.) **Sodomy** – the carnal sin against nature, which is any kind of sexual act that cannot naturally generate an offspring. The people of Sodom and Gomorrah indulged in these kinds of sins that the angels who came to save Lot and his family told him: “We will destroy this place, because their cry has grown loud before the Lord, who has sent us to destroy them” (Gen 19:13).
- c.) **Oppression of the poor** – the act of unjustly taking advantage of inferiors. “You shall not hurt a widow or an orphan. If you hurt them, they will cry out to me, and I will hear their cry; and my rage shall be enkindled, and I will strike you with the sword, and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless” (Ex 22:22-24).
- d.) **Defrauding laborers of their wages** – the act of unjustly reducing or holding back the laborer’s wages for selfish reasons. St. James wrote: “Behold the wages of the laborers who have reaped down your fields cry, which by fraud you have held back, and the cry of the laborers has entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth” (Jas 5:4).

LESSON 1 THE FIRST COMMANDMENT

“Thou shalt not have strange gods before me”

1. What does God command us by the first commandment?

By the first commandment, “Thou shalt not have strange gods before Me,” God commands us to acknowledge, adore, love and serve Him alone as our Sovereign Lord. He also wants us to nourish our faith, hope, and love for Him above all creatures.

2. How do we fulfill the first commandment?

We fulfill the first commandment by the practice of internal and external worship.

3. What is internal worship?

Internal worship is the honor which is given to God with the faculties of the soul alone, such as by prayer and adoration.

4. What is external worship?

External worship is the homage that is given to God by means of outward acts, such as by kneeling, making the sign of the cross, praying in public, attending Mass on Sundays, and performing other external sacrifices and acts of piety.

5. Is it not enough internally to adore God with the heart alone?

No, it is not enough internally to adore God with the heart alone. We must also adore Him externally with both soul and body, because He is the Creator and absolute Lord of both.

6. Can there be external worship without internal worship?

No, in no way can there be external worship without internal, because unless external worship is accompanied by internal, it is destitute of life, of merit, and of efficacy, like a body without a soul. (CCC 2100)

7. What is forbidden by the first commandment?

The first commandment forbids:

- a) *Acts against faith* – which include neglecting to study our religion, disregarding what the Church teaches, obstinately refusing to accept a truth of our Faith, and holding that all religions are equally the same (indifferentism). Participation in the rituals of other religions is a form of indifferentism and, therefore, is also an act against faith. Heresy, apostasy and schism are acts against faith and violate the first commandment. (CCC 2088-2089)

- b) *Acts against hope* – which include despairing of God’s mercy, as well as presuming that God’s mercy will forgive sins without contrition and good work. These are two of the “sins against the Holy Spirit” that was discussed earlier, and they are sins against the first commandment. (CCC 2091-2092)

- c) *Acts against charity* – which include hatred of God, indifference toward Him, ingratitude to His love for us, lukewarmness and spiritual sloth. Spiritual sloth consists in a reluctance to do anything pertaining to the worship of God or God’s service. (CCC 2093-2094)

8. What else does the first commandment forbid?

The first commandment also forbids idolatry, irreligion, atheism, agnosticism, superstition and, in general, all dealings with the devil. (CCC 2110-2128)

Idolatry is the worship of idols and false gods, or the act of giving to any creature, such as a statue, an image, a man, an animal or a plant the supreme worship of adoration that belongs to God alone. The worship of the moon, the sun, the earth, the world, or the material forces of the universe, – all of which are mere creatures of Almighty God, – is also a form of idolatry and is prohibited by the first commandment.

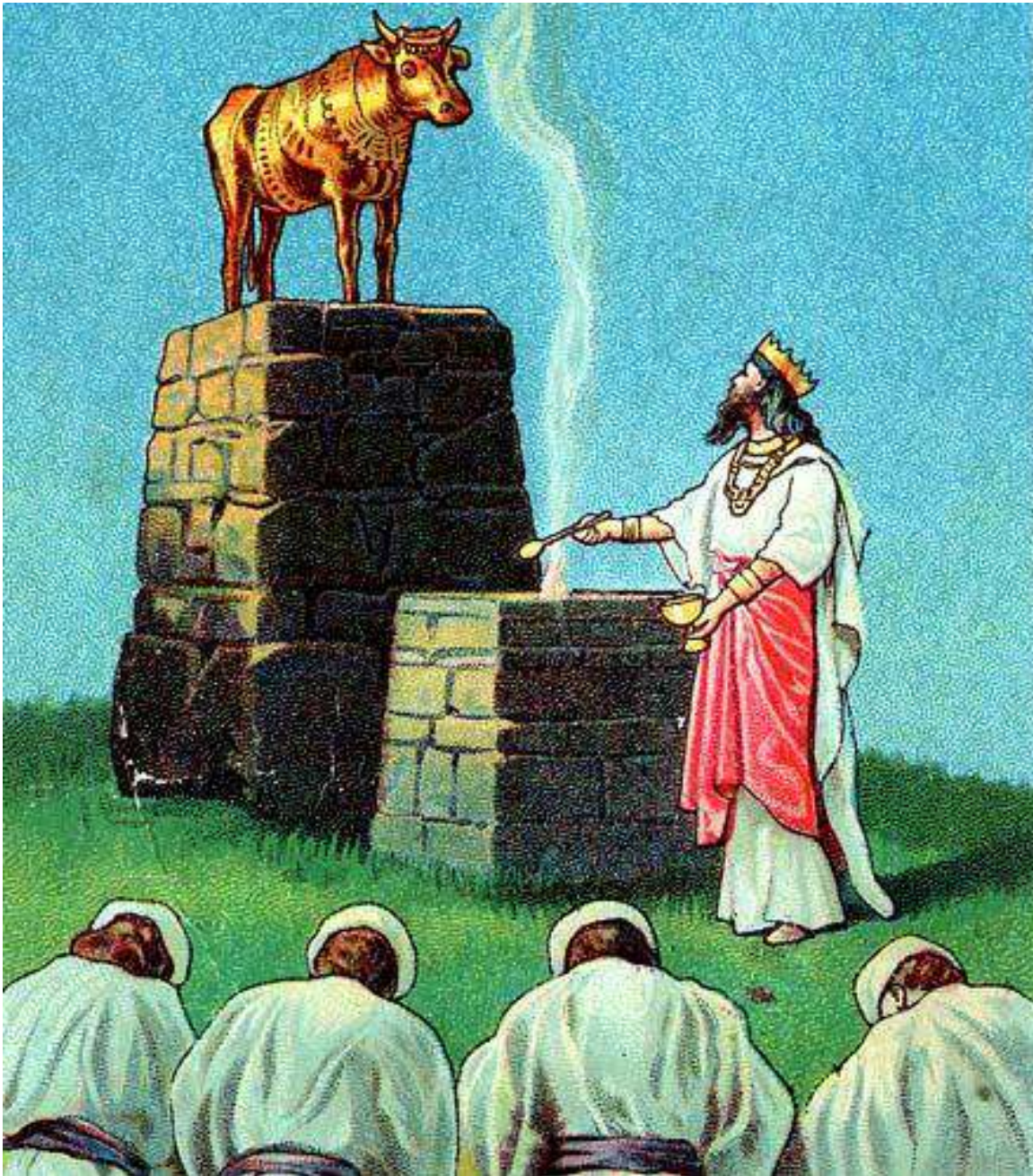


Fig 3.1.1 Jeroboam's Idolatry (1 Kgs 12:25-33)

Idolatry is not limited to the worship of creatures or created objects. Those who spend all their time in games, in their job, or in some other material pursuits, but who spend little or no time for God in prayer, are likewise guilty of “material idolatry,” because they show that they worship these mundane things more than God.

Irreligion is the lack of reverence, if not an outright hostility, toward God or religion. There are three acts that fall under this definition, all of which are against the first commandment:

- a) *Putting God's goodness or power to the test.* Satan was guilty of this when he challenged Christ to prove Himself the Son of God by turning the stone into bread (Luke 4:3).
- b) *Sacrilege* – is the profanation of a place, person, or thing consecrated to God and set apart for His worship. For example, vandalizing a church, stealing a sacred object (such as a chalice used in Holy Communion), etc. Actually, any lack of reverence made on something sacred, such as receiving Holy Communion with a mortal sin in the soul, is sacrilege.
- c) *Simony* – is the buying or selling of spiritual things or positions, such as the position of becoming bishop. This sin is named after Simon the magician, who thought he could obtain God's power with money (Acts 8:9-24). The buying and selling of religious articles itself is not simony. But buying and selling blessed objects *on account of their being blessed*, is simony. When a blessed object is sold, the blessing becomes void, and the object needs to be brought to the priest again for a blessing.

Atheism is the denial of the existence of God. This is a sin against the first commandment if one has the right concept of what God is, and still rejects His existence. However, God's action in the world is so manifest that only the fool says in his heart that there is no God (Ps 14:1). **Agnosticism** is the denial of man's ability to know God's existence, so it practically ends up also to atheism.

Superstition is the act of attributing to any person, object, or action a supernatural power that it does not possess. Consulting a fortune-teller, thinking that he or she has the power to see the future, is superstition. Using a charm or a rabbit's foot, believing that it has power to bring good luck, is also a form of superstition. Likewise, using spells to avert danger or to obtain a reward, is superstition and is against the first commandment. (CCC 2111)

9. If one were to have a recourse to the devil and invoke his help, would he commit a grave sin?

Yes, because the devil is the most wicked enemy both of God and of man. The first commandment forbids making any pact with the devil to obtain knowledge and power. Those who foolishly sell their souls to the devil sometimes find themselves out of time when they realize their mistake, and end up being too late to beg God for His mercy and forgiveness.

10. Is it permissible to engage in magic?

Magic, as the simple manifestation of wonders, is permissible as a form of entertainment, provided the intervention of evil spirits is not utilized, and the entire show is performed by purely natural and clever tricks. But black magic, sorcery and witchcraft, which invoke and use the occult powers of the devil, are forbidden by the first commandment. (CCC 2116-2117)

11. Is it permissible to engage in spiritism or consult the souls of the dead?

Spiritism is the alleged practice of communicating with the souls of the dead by the use of mediums and seances. All practices of spiritism are forbidden, because they are superstitious, and often are not free from deception and/or diabolical intervention.

12. Does not the first commandment forbid the making of statues and graven images as forms of idolatry?

The first commandment forbids *worshipping* statues and images, but it does not forbid *using* statues and images in worshipping the true God. The first commandment forbids making statues and images *to be worshipped as gods*, but it does not forbid making statues as objects *to help in worshipping the true God*. In fact, God Himself commanded Moses to make a pair of cherubim for the ark of the covenant (Ex 25:18-22), and a brazen serpent as a means of helping the Israelites in the desert (Num 21:4-9). (CCC 2132)



Fig 3.1.2 The Ark of the Covenant

13. Do Catholics commit idolatry when they kneel down and pray before images and statues of Christ, Mary or the saints?

No, because we do not honor the statues and images themselves, but the persons they represent.

14. Does the first commandment forbid honoring and praying to the angels and the saints?

No, it is not forbidden to honor and invoke the angels and saints. On the contrary, we should do so, because they are God's friends and our intercessors with Him.

- 15. Since Jesus Christ is our only mediator with God, why have recourse to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin or the saints? The saints intercede for us *through the merits of Jesus Christ also*; therefore, their intercession do not negate Christ's role as our true Mediator with God.**



Fig 3.1.3 Boy Praying before a Statue of the Blessed Virgin

- 16. May we honor the relics of the saints?**

The bodies and the remains of saints who have died are called *relics*. We should honor them because their bodies were temples of the Holy Spirit, and will also rise gloriously to eternal life.



Fig 3.1.4 Incorrupt Body of St. Bernadette Soubirous
The bodies, or parts of bodies, of the saints are important **relics**.

17. What is the difference between the honor we give to God and the honor we give to the saints?

The difference is that we adore God because of his infinite excellence, whereas we do not adore the saints, but only honor and venerate them as God's friends and our intercessors with Him. The honor we give to God is called *latria*, that is, the worship of *adoration*. The honor we give to the saints is called *dulia*, that is, the *veneration* of the servants of God. While the special honor we give to the Blessed Virgin is called *hyperdulia*, which is a *super-veneration* of the Mother of God.

LESSON 2 THE SECOND COMMANDMENT

“Thou shalt not take the name of God in vain.”

1. What does the second commandment, forbid?

The second commandment, “Thou shalt not take the name of God in vain,” forbids us: (1) To utter the name of God irreverently; (2) To blaspheme God, the Blessed Virgin or the saints; and (3) To make false, unnecessary, or unlawful oaths. (CCC 2146, 2147)

2. What is meant by, “Not to utter the name of God irreverently?”

“Not to utter the name of God irreverently” means not to mention His Holy Name, or any other name that in a special way refers to God Himself, such as the name of Jesus, of Mary and the saints, in anger or in joke or in any irreverent way whatsoever.

3. What is blasphemy?

Blasphemy is a horrible sin which consists in words or acts of contempt or malediction against God, the Blessed Virgin, the saints, or sacred things. (CCC 2148)

4. Is there any difference between blasphemy and imprecation?

There is a difference, because by blasphemy one wishes evil to or curses God, the Blessed Virgin or the saints; while by imprecation one wishes evil to or curses one's self or one's neighbor.

5. What is an oath?

An oath is the calling on God to witness the truth of what one says or promises.

6. Is it always forbidden to take an oath?

It is not always forbidden to take an oath. An oath is lawful and even gives honor to God, when it is necessary, and when one swears with truth, judgment and justice. (CCC 2154-2155)

7. When is an oath without truth?

An oath is without truth when one affirms on oath what he knows or believes to be false, or when one promises under oath to do what one has no intention of doing.

8. When is an oath without judgment?

An oath is without judgment when one makes oaths imprudently and without mature consideration, or in trivial matters.

9. When is an oath without justice?

An oath is without justice when one makes an oath to do something unjust or unlawful, as, for example, to swear to take revenge, or to steal, and so on.



Fig 3.2.1 Man Making an Oath

10. Is it a sin to swear or make an oath jestingly?

Yes. We should be careful of our speech, and not swear unnecessarily. The Lord Jesus said, “You have heard that it was said to them of old, You shall not swear falsely, but you shall perform your oaths to the Lord. But I say to you *not to swear at all*, ... let your speech be 'Yes, yes' and 'No, no;' that which is over and above these, is from the evil one” (Matt 5:33-37).

11. What sin does he commit who swears falsely?

He who swears falsely commits a mortal sin, because he grievously dishonors God, the Infinite Truth, by calling Him to witness what is false. This sin is called *perjury*. (CCC 2163)

12. If we swear to do that which is evil, are we bound to keep the oath?

No. Not only are we not obliged, but we would sin by doing such things, because a valid oath does not promote iniquity.

In the Gospel of St. Mark we have an example of a rash oath made by King Herod Antipas, who executed St. John the Baptist on the night of a sumptuous dinner party. After supper Princess Salome, the daughter of Herodias, danced so delightfully that King Herod, who was very much entertained by the dance, made an oath to her and said: “Ask of me what you wish, and I will give it to you, though it be half of my kingdom.” Upon Herodias’ suggestion, Princess Salome went to the king and said, “I wish that you immediately give me the head of John the Baptist in a dish.” Although King Herod had previously refused Herodias’ request to kill St. John (who was then in prison), knowing that he was a holy prophet, he nevertheless gave the order to execute John and bring his head on a platter in order to fulfill his oath and avoid embarrassment. Princess Salome received the head of St. John in a dish and handed it to Herodias, her mother. (Mark 6:21-28).



Fig 3.2.2 Herodias with the Head of St. John the Baptist

St. John the Baptist was beheaded on account of a rash oath made by King Herod Antipas to Princess Salome

13. What does the second commandment command us to do?

The second commandment commands us to honor the Holy Name of God, to always speak with reverence of Him and His saints, as well as to keep our oaths and vows.

14. What is a vow?

A vow is a promise made to God regarding something which is good, within our power, and better than its opposite, and which we bind ourselves to fulfill just as if it had been commanded us.

15. If the keeping of a vow were to become very difficult, in whole or in part, what is to be done?

When it becomes difficult to keep a vow, in whole or in part, then one may seek commutation or dispensation from the bishop or from the pope, depending on the character of the vow.

16. Is it a sin to break a vow?

It is a sin to break a vow and therefore we should not make vows without mature reflection, nor, as a rule, without the advice of our confessor or other prudent persons, so as not to expose ourselves to the danger of sinning.

17. May vows be made to our Lady and the saints?

Vows are made to God alone. However, we may promise God to do something in honor of our Lady or the saints.

LESSON 3 THE THIRD COMMANDMENT

“Remember thou keep holy the Sabbath day”

1. What does the third commandment command us to do?

The third commandment, “Remember thou keep holy the Sabbath day,” commands us to honor God by acts of worship on holy days.



Fig 3.3.1 People Going to Church on Sunday

2. What are the Sabbath or holy days?

In the Old Law the Sabbath – or the days the Jews reserved for worshipping God – were Saturdays and certain other days regarded as especially solemn by the Jews. In the New Law the Sabbath are Sundays and other holy days of obligation determined by the Church.

3. What are the holy days of obligation in the U.S. besides Sundays?

In the U.S. the holy days of obligation include the following:

Jan. 1 (New Year's Day) – Solemnity of **Mary, Mother of God**

Thursday of the Sixth Week of Easter – **Ascension of Christ**

Aug. 15 – The **Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary**

Nov. 1 – **All Saints Day**

Dec. 8 – The **Immaculate Conception**

Dec. 25 – **Christmas**, or the Nativity of our Lord

NOTE: When Jan. 1, Aug. 15, or Nov. 1 falls on a Saturday or Monday, the obligation to attend Mass does not apply.

4. Why is Sunday sanctified instead of Saturday in the New Law?

The Sabbath has been changed from Saturday to Sunday because it was on Sunday that our Lord rose from the dead. The Church did not just recently adopt this practice. This has been going on since the time of the Apostles. Thus, we read in the *Acts of the Apostles*: “On the first day of the week (that means, Sunday), when we were assembled to break bread (that is, to celebrate the Eucharist), Paul discoursed with them, being to depart on the morrow. And he continued his speech until midnight” (Acts 20:7).

5. What act of worship is commanded us by the Church on holy days?

We are commanded by the Church to assist devoutly at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass either on the holy day or the evening of the preceding day (CIC, cann. 1247, 1248). Note that although the third commandment teaches us to sanctify the Sabbath, it is the Church that specifies when to celebrate the Sabbath, and how to sanctify it. By its First Precept the Church commands us to sanctify the Sabbath on Sundays and holy days by attending Holy Mass.

6. With what other good works does a good Catholic sanctify holy days?

A good Catholic sanctifies holy days: (1) By studying catechism, and listening to sermons or homilies; (2) By spiritual reading and reflection; (3) By devoutly receiving the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist at the Sunday Mass; (4) By the practice of prayer and works of Christian charity.

7. What does the third commandment forbid?

The third commandment forbids unnecessary servile work, buying and selling, and any other works that hinder the worship of God.

8. What servile works are forbidden on holy days?

The servile works forbidden on holy days are unnecessary works that are done for pay, or works that are done to earn a living. But those who, because of poverty, misery, or social and family circumstances, cannot rest from work should still find sufficient time for God and the care of their souls.

9. What sin does one commit by doing unnecessary work on holy days?

One commits a mortal sin by doing *unnecessary* work that hinders the worship owed to God and the performance of works of mercy. However, cases of emergency will excuse from grave sin.

10. Is no servile work at all permitted on holy days?

On holy days servile works are permitted which are necessary for life, such as nursing the sick, or for the service of God, as well as those done for a grave reason. (CCC 2185)

11. What if you are required by your employer to work on Sundays and holy days?

You still have to set aside time for worship. Employers should cooperate in this regard and not make excessive demands on their employees' time. (CCC 2187)

12. Why is servile work forbidden on holy days?

Servile work is forbidden on holy days in order that we may better attend divine worship, care for our souls, and enable us to rest from toil. Light gardening and innocent recreation are not forbidden, provided ample time is also set aside for worship, prayer and reflection. (CCC 2193)

13. What else above all should we avoid on holy days?

We should avoid sin and whatever leads to sin, such as morally dangerous games, recreations and places of amusement.

LESSON 4 THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT

“Honor thy father and thy mother.”

1. What does the fourth commandment command?

The fourth commandment, “Honor thy father and thy mother,” commands us to respect our parents, obey them in all that is not sinful, and assist them in their temporal and spiritual needs, especially in their old age. (CCC 2214-2220)

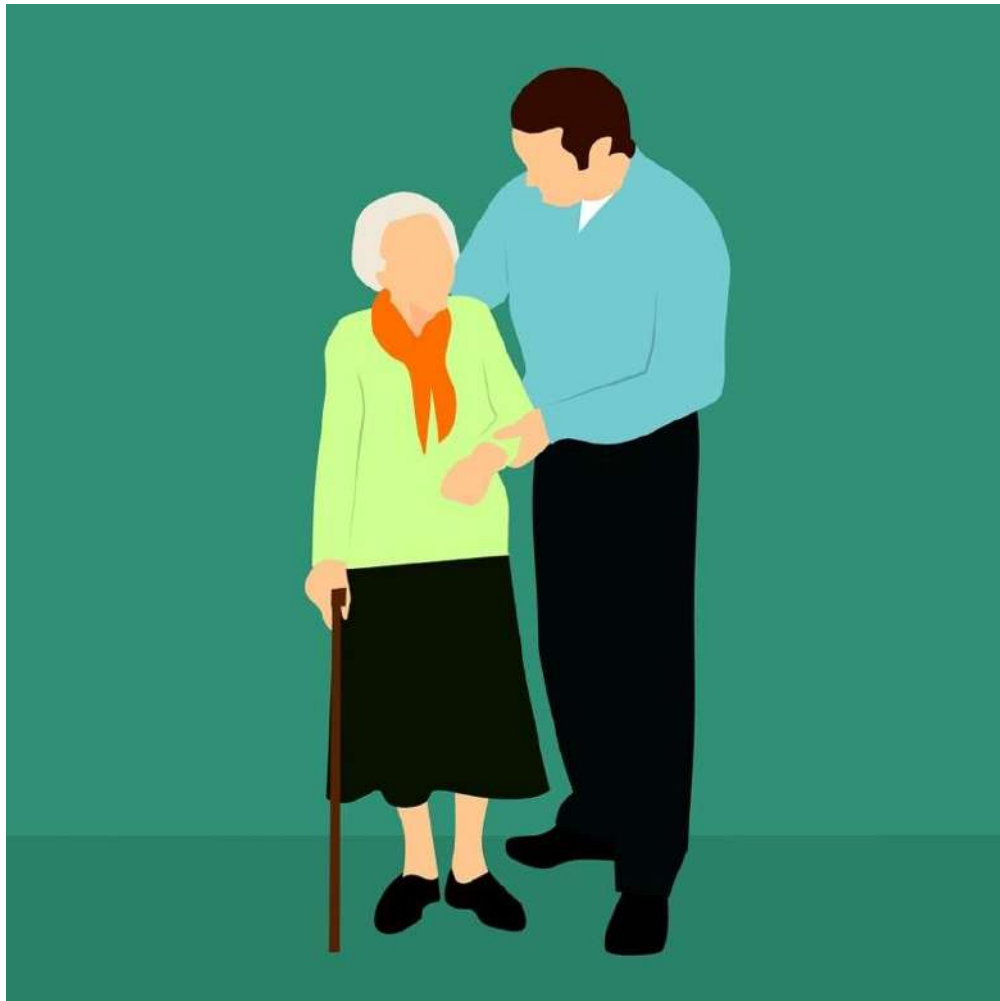


Fig 3.4.1 Caring for Aging Parents

2. What does the fourth commandment forbid?

The fourth commandment forbids us to offend our parents by word or by deed or in any other way.

3. Why does God ask us to honor our parents?

In the fourth commandment God asks us to honor our parents because we owe them our life, and they were the ones responsible for raising us and educating us. (CCC 2197)

4. Where did the authority of parents to command their children and the duty of children to obey their parents come from?

The authority of parents to command their children and the obligation of children to obey their parents, came from God who constituted and established family life in order that in it man might have the first helps that are necessary toward his spiritual and temporal well-being.

5. Have parents any duties toward their children?

Yes! Parents are bound to love, support and maintain their children; to attend to their religious and secular education; to give them good example; to keep them from the occasions of sin; to correct their faults; and to help them embrace the state to which God has called them. (CCC 2221-2231)



Fig 3.4.2 Mother Teaching her Daughter to Pray

6. Has God given us an example of a perfect family?

God gave us an example of a perfect family in the Holy Family in which Jesus Christ lived subject to the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph until His thirtieth year, that is, until He began the mission of preaching the Gospel entrusted to Him by His Eternal Father.

7. What other persons does this commandment include under the names of father and mother?

Under the names of father and mother this commandment also includes our elders and ancestors, as well as all our superiors, both ecclesiastical and lay, whom we must consequently obey and respect. Our ecclesiastical superiors include our pastors (the deacons, priests and bishops), while our lay superiors include our teachers, employers, and civil authorities. (CCC 2199)

8. Why does God command us to reverence our pastors?

God commands us to honor and reverence our pastors because they represent Christ, and because God had appointed them to be the guides and feeders of our souls (1 Tim 5:17).

9. If families were to live alone, cut off one from the other, could they provide for all their material and moral needs?

If families lived alone, cut off one from the other, they could not provide for their individual needs, and hence it is necessary that they be united in civil society so as to mutually aid one another for the common good and happiness.

10. What is civil society?

Civil society is the union of many families under the authority of a governor for the purpose of assisting each other in securing their mutual perfection and temporal happiness.

11. Whence comes the authority which rules civil society?

The authority which civil society has to rule and govern families comes from God, because all authority is from God: “there is no power but from God” (Rom 13:1).

12. Are we under any obligation to obey the authority that governs civil society?

Yes; all families and members of civil society are bound to respect and obey authority because that authority comes from God and because the common good so demands it. (CCC 2234)

13. Are all laws imposed by the civil authority to be respected?

Yes. In accordance with the command and example of our Lord Jesus Christ, all laws imposed by the civil authority are to be respected, provided they are not contrary to the law of God. If civil authority commands us to do anything sinful, then like St. Peter and the Apostles, we must answer and say: “We ought to obey God, rather than men” (Acts 5:29).

LESSON 5 THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT

“Thou shalt not kill.”

1. What does the fifth commandment forbid?

The fifth commandment, “Thou shalt not kill,” forbids us to kill, strike, wound or do any other bodily harm to our neighbor, either by ourselves alone or with others. It also forbids hating our neighbor, wishing him evil or offending him by insulting or injurious language.

2. Why is it a grave sin to kill one's neighbor?

It is a grave sin to kill one’s neighbor because (1) the slayer unjustly invades the right which God alone has over the life of a person; (2) he disturbs the peace and destroys the security of civil society; and (3) he deprives his neighbor of life, which is the greatest natural good on earth. (CCC 2268-2269)



Fig 3.5.1 Killing an innocent person is *murder*.

3. Are there cases in which it is lawful to kill?

It is lawful to kill when fighting a just war; when carrying out a sentence of death in punishment of a crime (capital punishment); and in cases of necessary and lawful self-defense against an unjust aggressor. However, unnecessary killing and the murder of innocent people are forbidden even in a just war. (CCC 2263-2267)

4. Does God also forbid us in the fifth commandment to do harm to the spiritual life of another?

Yes, in the fifth commandment God also forbids us to do harm to another's spiritual life by *scandal*.



Fig 3.5.2 A Millstone Hanged about the Neck

Christ said, “But he that shall scandalize one of these little ones that believes in me, it would be better for him that a millstone should be hanged around his neck, and that he should be drowned in the depth of the sea” (Matt 18:6).

5. What is scandal?

Scandal is any word, act, or omission which gives an occasion for another person to commit sin. For example, when you tell immodest stories to a child, you are giving that child an occasion to commit sin and harm his or her soul. Even if the child did not sin on account of your stories, you have committed a grave sin of scandal because you endangered the child's soul. If harming the body is forbidden by the fifth commandment, so is harming the soul. (CCC 2284)

6. Is scandal a grave sin?

Scandal is a grave sin because, by causing the loss of souls, it tends to oppose the greatest work of God, which is the salvation of souls. It effects the death of another person's soul by depriving it of the life of grace, which is more precious than the life of the body, and is the source of a multitude of sins. Hence God threatens the severest chastisement to those who give scandal, especially to the young. (CCC 2285)

7. Why does God, in the fifth commandment, forbid the taking of one's own life or suicide?

God forbids suicide, because man is not the master of his own life any more than he is of the life of another.

8. Is direct abortion also forbidden by the fifth commandment?

Abortion is a medical procedure that results in the death of an unborn child. If the death of the child is directly intended, then it is called *direct abortion*, and is NOT permitted. This procedure is forbidden by the fifth commandment even to save the mother's life. However, if the death of the child results merely as an unintended effect, and every precaution is taken to safeguard the child, then this is a case of *indirect abortion*, and may be allowed for a grave reason. But direct abortion, or the direct killing of an unborn child, is nothing else but *murder*. (CCC 2270-2275)

9. Is mercy killing or *euthanasia* also forbidden by the fifth commandment?

Yes, “mercy killing,” or the practice of killing a person to relieve him of pain, is forbidden by the fifth commandment. However, the use of painkillers is permitted even if they hasten death of the patient as an unintended effect. But equally forbidden is the direct killing of defective, moronic, or incapacitated individuals on the excuse of mercy. Even the government has no right to take the life of innocent people. (CCC 2276-2279)

10. What else is forbidden by the fifth commandment?

Other acts forbidden by the fifth commandment are those that cause injury to our bodies or minds, such as excessive eating or drinking, substance or drug abuse, and bodily *mutilation*. (CCC 2290-2291)

11. What is bodily mutilation?

Bodily mutilation is the direct destruction or removal of any part of the body. This is forbidden unless it is the only way to save or preserve the life of a person. It is also forbidden even if it is done for purposes of experimentation or research. Examples of bodily mutilation forbidden by the fifth commandment include *vasectomy* and *tubal ligation*, which are sometimes done to prevent pregnancy. (CCC 2295, 2297)

12. What does the fifth commandment command?

The fifth commandment commands us to forgive our enemies, wish them well and avoid war. (CCC 2307-2308)

13. What should he do who has injured another in the life of either body or soul?

He who has injured another must not only confess his sin, but must also repair the harm by compensating his neighbor for the loss he has sustained, by retracting the errors taught, and by giving good example.

Anger, Hatred and Revenge



Fig 3.5.3 Christ Driving the Merchants out of the Temple

14. What is anger?

Anger is a strong feeling of displeasure, accompanied by a desire to punish the offender. To be unjustly angry with another person is always a sin against the fifth commandment. But when anger is justified, then it is not a sin. For example, Christ was justly angry at the money changers in the Temple, because they had converted the Temple, which was a house of prayer, into a den of thieves (Matt 21:13). So he overturned their tables, made a scourge of little cords and drove them all out away (John 2:15).

15. What is hatred?

Hatred is a strong dislike of or ill-will toward someone. It is like a habitual anger because he who hates someone sees nothing good in that person. It is not a sin to hate the evil qualities of others; but we must be careful *to hate only the sin, not the sinner*.

16. What is revenge?

Revenge is a desire to inflict excessive punishment on someone who has injured us, from a motive of anger or hatred. It is a sin against the fifth commandment because it is unfair. It is not wrong to punish an offender, but the punishment must be justly proportionate to the offence. We must keep in mind that the purpose of punishment is not to inflict pain or injury, but to correct the offender. If the punishment is excessive because it is vengeful, the offender will likely retaliate and reject the correction, thus defeating the purpose of the punishment.

LESSON 6 THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT

“Thou shalt not commit adultery.”

1. What does the sixth commandment forbid?

The sixth commandment, “Thou shalt not commit adultery,” forbids every act, every look and every word contrary to chastity. It also forbids infidelity in marriage.

2. Is impurity a great sin?

It is a most grave and abominable sin in the sight of God and man; it lowers man to the condition of the brute. It drags him into many other sins and vices, and it provokes the most terrible chastisements from God both in this world and in the next. Thus, God destroyed the ancient cities of Sodom and Gomorrah precisely on account of their sins of impurity (Jude 1:7).

3. How are the sixth and ninth commandments related?

The sixth commandment commands us to be chaste and modest *exteriorly*, that is, in actions, in look and in speech. In addition the ninth commandment commands us to be chaste and pure *interiorly*, that is, in mind and in heart.

4. What does the sixth commandment forbid?

The sixth commandment forbids divorce, adultery, fornication, masturbation, sodomy, homosexual acts, the use of artificial means of birth control, pornography, prostitution, rape, and any other form of immodesty in dress, speech and actions.

Divorce – is the claim to break the marriage bond that binds husbands and wives together. This is a grave offense against the sixth commandment even if it is recognized by civil law. (CCC 2384-2385)

Adultery – is the unfaithfulness of a married person who is having an affair (sex) with someone other than his or her spouse.

Fornication – is a sexual union between an unmarried man and an unmarried woman. If one partner is married, then the sin is called adultery, not fornication. The common practice of many people today who live together without being married, or prior to being married, is a case of fornication and, therefore, prohibited by the sixth commandment. Young men and women should wait until they are married before they sleep together. Women often do not realize that men respect them more when they show restraint and self-respect. (CCC 2353)



Fig 3.6.1 The Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 18 – 19)

Masturbation – is the stimulation of the sexual organs in order to derive sexual pleasure. When performed deliberately, whether alone or with others, *it is always a mortal sin* (CCC 2352).

Sodomy – is any sexual activity between two individuals that cannot naturally result in the generation of an offspring. Examples of sodomitic activities are anal or oral copulation. Sexual activity between a person and a beast is called **bestiality**, and is a gross form of sodomy.

Homosexual acts are sexual activities *between two people of the same sex*. Since these acts could not naturally result in an offspring, they are also a special form of sodomy. Homosexual men are called *gays*; homosexual women are called *lesbians*. Homosexual acts between gays or between lesbians are sinful because they are intrinsically disordered acts (CCC 2357).

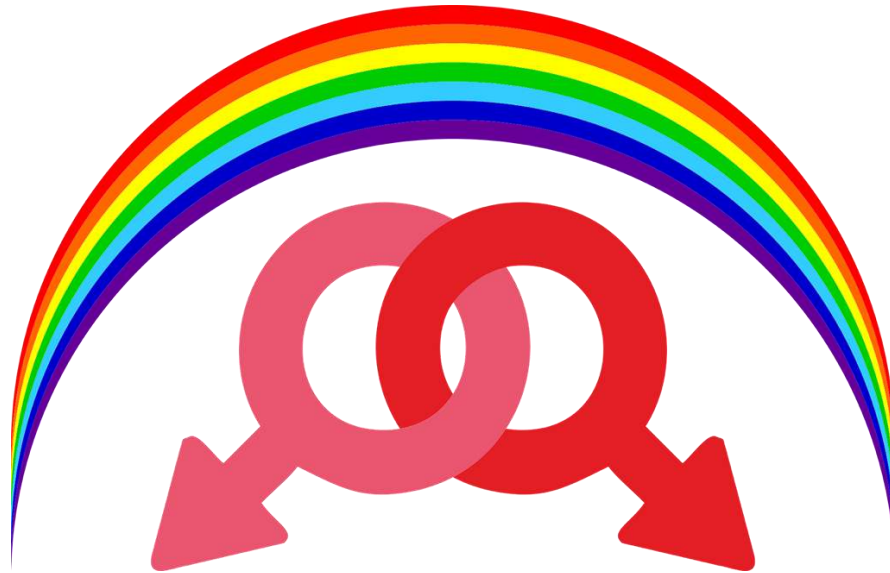


Fig 3.6.2 Some Emblems Used by Homosexuals

The Use of Artificial Means of Birth Control – is the practice of utilizing artificial devices (condoms, pills or drugs), that are designed to prevent conception. This practice is immoral and unnatural, because it frustrates the purpose of the sexual act by artificially blocking what the sexual act would naturally accomplish without those devices, and that is, the generation of an offspring.

Prostitution – is the practice of engaging in sexual activity with someone for payment. (CCC 2355)

Rape – is a sexual act carried out forcibly or under threat of injury against a person’s will, or with a person who is incapable of valid consent because of immaturity, mental illness, intoxication, or deception. (CCC 2356)

Pornography – is the production of printed, audible and/or visual materials (sound records, photos, videos, magazines, etc.) that explicitly display sexual organs or activities for the purpose of exciting sexual pleasure to third parties (readers, hearers and viewers). All who promote pornography – the producers, the actors, cameramen, advertisers, financiers, etc. – commit a grave sin against the sixth commandment. (CCC 2354)

Immodesty in behavior, speech or dress – refers to any act, speech or manner of dressing that leads to unlawful sexual pleasure. Immodest games, immodest stories, and immodest fashions, besides being forbidden by the sixth commandment, could also cause scandal when carried out around young people.

5. Are homosexual acts normal?

No, because they are *unnatural*. Saying that homosexual acts are unnatural does not mean that they do not happen in nature, but that they do not conform with *the intent that God has in nature*. “Male and female He created them,” the Bible says (Gen 1:27). This means that it is the Creator’s will that male should mate with female, not male with another male, nor female with another female. The intent of the Creator in inventing sex is to preserve the species through the procreation of offspring, and this only happens in a relation involving male and female. No offspring can result from the sexual activity of two males or two females. Therefore, homosexual acts do not conform with the order or intent of God in nature and are both unnatural and abnormal.

6. Are homosexual acts sinful?

Yes, because they are *intrinsically disordered acts*; that is, they violate the natural order established by God, that sexual activity should only be between male and female, so that the procreation of offspring can be made possible. Some people have argued that homosexuality is natural and, therefore, not sinful because some lower animals have been observed to engage also in so-called “homosexual” behavior. But in many cases the homosexual nature of these animal acts are only apparent rather than real. Many animals do these for purely sexual gratification. And their behavior is not necessarily the pattern on which human behavior should be modeled. For example, brute animals frequently engage in sex without asking the consent of the female. Should humans do the same? Of course, not. Therefore, animal behavior should not be used as a model for human behavior, for brute animals do not know better. Unlike lower animals, human beings have a rational nature that can perceive and respect God’s will in nature. Unlike brute animals, we are aware that sex has a more noble purpose than purely sexual gratification, and that is procreation. Therefore, in man all sexual activities must be controlled by reason.

7. Are homosexual tendencies normal?

No. If homosexual acts are not normal, neither are homosexual tendencies. There is no scientific proof yet that anyone is born gay. But even those who feel that they were born with homosexual tendencies still have the responsibility to live a chaste life.

8. Are homosexual tendencies and desires likewise sinful?

Yes, because they are directed against the end intended by the Creator. However, homosexual desires are more against the ninth commandment rather than the sixth commandment. But like all unnatural tendencies, homosexual tendencies can be controlled, and human beings ought to be masters, rather than slaves, of their passions.

9. What should be our attitude toward homosexuals?

We should treat them with respect and compassion. Hate the sin (homosexual acts), but not the sinner. Even homosexual persons are called to live a life of chastity and control their unnatural tendencies. (CCC 2357-2359)

10. What does the sixth commandment command?

The sixth commandment commands us to be chaste and modest in act, in look, in behavior and in speech.

11. What must we do to observe the sixth commandment?

To observe the sixth commandment, we ought to pray often; be devoted to the Blessed Virgin, the Mother of purity; meditate often on the passion of Jesus Christ; guard our senses; and frequent the sacraments with the proper dispositions. In addition we must keep ourselves chaste by avoiding idleness, bad companions, books and magazines that glorify sex, indecent videos, TV shows and pornographic websites, dangerous conversations, and all other occasions of sin.

LESSON 7 THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT

“Thou shalt not steal.”

1. What does the seventh commandment forbid?

The seventh commandment, “Thou shalt not steal,” forbids all unjust taking and all unjust keeping of what belongs to another, and also every other way of cheating our neighbor in his exterior or interior goods. The seventh commandment also forbids any act or business dealings that treat people, particularly women and children, like marketable merchandise. The buying, selling, or trading of people lead to *slavery*, and they rob people, not only of their external goods, but also of their spiritual dignity and worth as human beings. (CCC 2414)

2. What is meant by stealing?

Stealing is taking another's goods unjustly and against the owner's will, when the owner has every reason and right to be unwilling to be deprived of them. This is done in two ways: by theft and by robbery. **Theft** is committed by taking another's goods secretly. **Robbery** is committed by taking another's goods openly and with violence.

3. Why is it forbidden to steal?

Because stealing is an offense against justice and violates another person's *right to property*, that is, the right of every person to own what he or she acquired by work, by gift or by inheritance.

4. Are a person's properties exclusively for himself alone?

No, because the goods of this earth are destined for the benefit of humanity. So, those who own properties over and above what they need, also have a responsibility to share their properties to others in great need. (CCC 2404)



Fig 3.7.1 Boys Stealing Apples

Question for discussion: When would stealing apples not be sinful?

5. Are there cases when another's goods can be taken without sin?

Yes, when the owner consents, or when the owner unjustly refuses to share his goods to someone in extreme necessity. Since the goods of this earth are destined to benefit humanity, a person in extreme need may take another's goods without sin, provided that he takes only so much as is absolutely necessary to relieve pressing and extreme need. (CCC 2408)

6. Is it only by theft and robbery that another can be injured in his property?

He can also be injured by fraud, usury, bribery, undue taxation, gambling and any other act of injustice directed against his goods.

7. How is fraud committed?

Fraud is committed in trade by deceiving another by false weight, money or by bad goods; by falsifying writings and documents; by deceit in buying and selling or in contracts in general, as well as by refusing to pay what is just and agreed upon.

8. How is usury committed?

Usury is committed by exacting excessive interest for money lent, thus taking an unfair advantage of another's need or ignorance.

9. How is bribery committed?

Bribery is committed by offering (or receiving) money or other forms of inducement to obtain (or to grant) favor dishonestly. This is committed, for example, by public officials who, in consideration for money received, allow any wrong-doing to go unpunished. Both the person who offered money, and the one who received money unjustly, are guilty of the sin of bribery.

10. What is undue taxation?

Undue taxation is the act of unjustly or unnecessarily collecting taxes from, but without a proportionate benefit to, the citizens.

11. What is gambling, and why is it against the seventh commandment?

Gambling is the act of playing a game of chance by the use of money that one cannot afford to lose. Betting in a game of chance may sometimes be permitted if done merely to add fun to the game. However, this is dangerous if not controlled. Thus, betting large sums of money, especially money that is needed to support one's family, is sinful, because it exposes the family to the risk of great and unnecessary loss of its financial support. (CCC 2413)

12. What other sorts of injustice may be committed with regard to another's goods?

By unjustly causing another person to lose what he has; by not working as duty requires; by maliciously refusing to pay debts, or defrauding laborers their wage; by damaging property held in custody; by preventing another from making just gains; by aiding thieves; and by receiving, concealing or buying stolen goods.

13. Is it a grave sin to steal?

It is a grave sin against justice when the matter is grave; for it is most important for the good of individuals, of families, and of society that each one's right to his property should be respected.

14. When is stolen matter grave?

When that which is taken is considerable; also when serious loss is inflicted on another by taking something that in itself is of little value, such as stealing a professor's eyeglasses or an old man's cane.

15. What does the seventh commandment command?

The seventh commandment commands us to respect, not only the goods and properties of other people, but also the integrity of all creation. Plants and animals are also destined to benefit humanity; so the seventh commandment also enjoins us to care for them as their good stewards. (CCC 2415-2418)

16. What does the seventh commandment command employers and employees?

The seventh commandment commands employees to do their work diligently in return for payment received. Failure to do diligent work is a form of stealing. Likewise, the seventh commandment commands employers to give their employees a *just wage*. A fair or just wage is not merely one that complies with the law, or one based merely on the market value of labor, but also one that provides the laborer a dignified livelihood for himself and his family. (CCC 2434)

17. Is it enough for one who has sinned against the seventh commandment to confess his sin?

It is not enough for one who has sinned against the seventh commandment merely to confess his sin; he must also do his best to restore what belongs to others, and to repair the loss he has caused by his sin. (CCC 2412)

18. What is meant by repairing the losses caused?

Repairing the losses caused refers to the compensation that must be made to another for the goods or profits lost owing to the theft or other acts of injustice committed to his detriment.

19. To whom must stolen property be returned?

To him from whom it has been stolen; to his heirs, if he is dead; or if this is really impossible the value of it should be given to the poor or to some charity.

20. What should one do who finds something of great value?

He should diligently seek the owner and faithfully return it to him.

LESSON 8 THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT

“Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.”

1. What does the eighth commandment forbid?

The eighth commandment, “Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor,” forbids false testimony in a court of justice, and it also forbids backbiting, detraction, calumny, flattery, rash judgment and suspicion, and every sort of lying.



Fig 3.8.1 Revealing the Hidden Faults of Others by Gossiping is Sinful

2. What is detraction or backbiting?

Detraction or backbiting is speaking ill of someone behind his back. It is a secret staining of another person's good name.

3. What is calumny?

Calumny is a sin which consists in maliciously attributing to another faults and defects which he did not possess. (CCC 2477)

4. What is flattery?

Flattery is a sin which consists in deceiving another by falsely praising him or others for the purpose of profiting thereby.

5. What is rash judgment or rash suspicion?

Rash judgment or rash suspicion is a sin which consists in judging or suspecting evil of others without sufficient foundation. It is a sin because it robs our neighbor of his good name. Holy Scripture says, "Do not judge, that you may not be judged" (Matt 7:1).

6. What is a lie?

A lie is asserting as true what one believes to be false, with the intention of deceiving. Lying is bearing false witness and, when done under oath, is called *perjury*. (CCC 2476, 2482-2483)

7. How many kinds of lies are there?

There are three kinds: The jocose lie, the officious lie, and the malicious lie.

A **jocose lie** is that which is told as a joke and without injury to anyone.

An **officious lie** is a false statement to benefit oneself or another without hurting anyone else.

A **malicious lie** is a false statement made to hurt someone or his good name.

8. Is it ever lawful to tell a lie?

It is never lawful to tell a lie, neither in joke, nor for one's own benefit, nor for the benefit of another, because to lie is always a bad act in itself. To lie is to be a child of the devil, “for he (the devil) is a liar, and the father of liars” (John 8:44). Lying through the social media, such as by spreading “fake news,” to gain an advantage or to advance a political agenda, is a great evil because of the great number of people who are being misled by the false information. (CCC 2493-2499)

9. What kind of sin is a lie?

A lie when jocose or officious is a venial sin; but any lie, including a jocose lie, may be a mortal sin depending on the intentions of the speaker, the circumstances of time, place and person affected by the lie, as well as by the gravity and *nature* of the injury caused by the lie itself. For example, an injury done to one's good name could be more hurtful than an injury done to one's property. (CCC 2484-2485)

10. Is it always necessary to say all one's mind?

It is not always necessary, especially when he who questions you has no right to know what he demands. We must always say the truth, only the truth, and nothing but the truth; but we do not always need to tell the whole truth, especially with regard to matters that have been entrusted to us confidentially. (CCC 2491)

11. Is it enough for him who has sinned against the eighth commandment to confess the sin?

It is not enough for him who has sinned against the eighth commandment to confess the sin; he is also obliged to retract whatever he said when calumniating another, and *to repair as far as he can* the harm he has done to another person's property, reputation or good name. (CCC 2487)

12. What does the eighth commandment command us to do?

The eighth commandment commands us to speak the truth at the proper time and place, and, as far as we can, to put a good interpretation upon the actions of our neighbor. Above all, the eighth commandment also commands us to bear witness *to the truth of our faith*. (CCC 2472-2474)

LESSON 9 THE NINTH COMMANDMENT

“Thou shalt not covet another’s wife.”

1. What does the ninth commandment forbid?

The ninth commandment, “Thou shalt not covet another’s wife,” expressly forbids every desire contrary to that fidelity which husband and wife vowed to observe when contracting marriage. It also forbids every thought or desire of anything that is prohibited by the sixth commandment.



Fig 3.9.1 Infidelity and Immodest Desires

Thinking or desiring of having an affair with someone other than your spouse is against the ninth commandment.

2. Is impurity in thought or desire a great sin?

It is a most grave and abominable sin in the sight of God and man because it lowers man to the condition of the brute. Christ said, “You have heard that it was said to them of old: *You shall not commit adultery*. But I say to you that whoever shall look on a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (Matt 5:27-28).

3. Is every thought that comes into the mind against purity a sin?

The thoughts that come into the mind against purity are not of themselves sins, but rather temptations and incentives to sin.

4. When is a bad thought or desire a sin?

Bad thoughts, even though resulting in no bad deed, are sins when we culpably entertain them, or consent to them, or expose ourselves to the proximate danger of consenting to them.

5. Are homosexual thoughts and desires also sinful?

Yes, because they are directed toward an end not intended by the Creator. Homosexual thoughts and desires are against the ninth commandment and are also sins against purity.

6. What do the sixth and ninth commandments command?

The sixth commandment commands us to be chaste and modest *exteriorly*, that is, in acts, in looks, in behavior, and in speech. In addition the ninth commandment commands us to be chaste and pure *interiorly*, that is, in mind and in heart.

7. What must we do to observe the ninth commandment?

To observe the ninth commandment we need to do pretty much the same things as was recommended to observe the sixth commandment: we ought to pray to God often; be devoted to the Blessed Virgin, the Mother of purity; meditate on the passion of Jesus Christ; guard our senses; practice Christian mortification; and frequent the sacraments with the proper dispositions. Note, too, that the battle for purity is not merely an individual effort, but requires the purification of the social climate. (CCC 2525-2526)

8. What must we avoid in order to keep our hearts chaste?

To keep our hearts chaste we must avoid idleness, bad companions, the reading of bad books and magazines, watching indecent pictures, TV shows and pornographic websites, engaging in dangerous conversations, and all other occasions of sin.

LESSON 10 THE TENTH COMMANDMENT

“Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods.”

1. What does the tenth commandment forbid?

The tenth commandment, “Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods,” forbids the wish to deprive another of his goods and the wish to acquire goods by unjust means.

2. Why does God forbid the undue desire of another's goods?

God forbids the unregulated desire of another's goods, because He wishes us to be just even in thought and will, and to hold ourselves completely aloof from unjust acts. A feeling of *envy* in the good fortune of others is dangerous, and must be banished from the heart. (CCC 2538-2540)

3. What does the tenth commandment command?

The tenth commandment commands us to be satisfied with the state in which God has placed us, and to bear poverty patiently. God rewards the poor in spirit, saying that the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs. (Matt 5:3)

4. Is there a relation between the tenth and seventh commandment?

Yes. The seventh commandment requires our *exterior* acts to be respectful of the properties of others, and not to steal them or damage them for no reason. The tenth commandment requires our *interior* acts (thoughts and desires) to be respectful of the properties of others. Thus, the *act* of stealing is against the seventh commandment. But the *thought* of stealing is against the tenth commandment.



Fig 3.10.1 The Tenth Commandment

It is not forbidden to desire what other people have, but it is forbidden to think or desire of *depriving them* of what is theirs. (CCC 2537)

5. How can a Christian be content in a state of poverty?

A Christian can be content in a state of poverty by reflecting that our greatest good is a pure and peaceful conscience; that our true home is Heaven; and that Jesus Christ made Himself poor for love of us and has promised a special reward to those who bear poverty patiently. (CCC 2544-2547)

LESSON 11 THE PRECEPTS OF THE CHURCH

1. Besides the commandments of God what else must we observe?

Besides the commandments of God, we must also observe the precepts of the Church.

2. Are we obliged to obey the Church?

Undoubtedly we are obliged to obey the Church, because Jesus Christ Himself commands us to do so: “He that hears you hears Me, and he that despises you despises Me, and he that despises Me despises Him that sent Me” (Luke 10:16)

3. Is it a sin to transgress a precept of the Church?

Knowingly to transgress a precept of the Church in grave matter is a mortal sin.

4. What are the Precepts of the Church?

The Precepts of the Church are the following (CCC 2042-2043):

1. To attend Mass on all Sundays and holy days of obligation;
2. To confess our sins at least once a year;
3. To receive Holy Communion during the Easter time;
4. To keep all holy days of obligation holy;
5. To fast and abstain on the days appointed.

NOTES:

- **On the first precept:** This precept has been discussed in relation to the third commandment. For details, review Lesson 3 above.
- **On the second precept:** Although the second precept only requires going to confession once a year, it is good practice and highly recommended to go to confession *once a month*, especially if you receive Holy Communion every Sunday or

holy day of obligation. Also, make it a point to go to confession **as soon as possible** when you are conscious of having committed a mortal sin.

- **On the third precept:** In the U.S. the obligation to receive Holy Communion during the Easter season, sometimes called the “Easter duty,” can be fulfilled from the First Sunday of Lent until Trinity Sunday.
- **On the fourth precept:** Like the first precept, this one has been discussed in connection with the third commandment.
- **On the fifth precept:** This precept will be discussed more thoroughly in questions 6 - 9 below.
- Although not presented as a precept, the faithful also have the duty to provide for the material necessities of the Church, each according to his abilities (CIC, can. 222).

5. Why does the Church have to make the first and fourth precepts when God has already given the third commandment?

The third commandment only commands us to keep the sabbath holy. However, it is the Church that determines by its first precept that the Sabbath is to be observed on Sunday rather than Saturday, and that the best way to sanctify the Sabbath is by attending Holy Mass, studying catechism, spiritual reading, etc. Likewise, it is the Church that determines the holy days of obligation, which must be observed like Sundays. Although these have been discussed in connection with the third commandment, these holy days of obligation have been determined by the Church and commanded to be kept holy by its fourth precept.

6. What does the law of abstinence forbid?

The law of abstinence forbids consuming meat from mammals and birds, but not eggs, butter, cheese and meatless soups (such as chicken broth), although these are derived from meat. Veggies and, in general, seafood (fish, shrimp, etc.) are permitted.



Fig 3.11.1 An example dish for a day of abstinence

7. Who are required to abstain, and when is abstinence to be observed?

In the U.S. everyone from age 14 and up must abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, and all Fridays of Lent, except when a solemnity falls on a Friday. The Fridays outside the season of Lent are *days of penance* (CIC, can. 1250), but not necessarily days of abstinence. Therefore, although abstinence from meat is a recommended form of penance even on Fridays outside Lent, one may instead do corporal or spiritual works of mercy for penance.

8. What does the law of fasting command?

The law of fasting requires all Catholics to have only one regular meal, but allows 2 smaller meals that together do not equal one regular meal.

9. Who are required to fast, and when is fasting to be observed?

In the U.S. everyone from age 18 until age 59 must fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday (CIC, can. 1251).

Picture Credits / Sources

Fig 3 The Holy Family

Artist: Bartolomé Esteban Murillo (1617-1682)

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bartolomé_Esteban_Perez_Murillo_003.jpg

Fig 3.0.1 Moses Carrying the Two Tables of Stone

http://www.marysrosaries.com/collaboration/index.php?title=File:Moses_001.jpg

Fig 3.0.2 Adam and Eve Expelled from Paradise

Artist: Gustave Doré (1832-1883)

The original drawing is in black and white. I adjusted the colors.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Adam_and_Eve_Driven_out_of_Eden.png

Fig 3.1.1 Jeroboam's Idolatry (1 Kgs 12:25-33)

Source: Providence Lithograph Co., 1904.

Fig 3.1.2 The Ark of the Covenant

http://www.marysrosaries.com/collaboration/index.php?title=File:Ark_of_the_Covenant_001.jpg

Fig 3.1.3 Boy Praying before a Statue of the Blessed Virgin

The Pinterest button below the image indicates that the image may be shared for non-commercial use.

https://www.zazzle.com/vintage_little_boy_praying_to_blessed_virgin_mary_classic_round_sticker-217185410200771414?rf=238877146116362811&social=true&tc=pinterest

Fig 3.1.4 Incorrupt Body of St. Bernadette Soubirous

CC BY-SA 3.0 Unported License

Attribution:

- [Bernadette_Soubirous-sarcophagus.jpg](#): Original uploader was Rook at pl.wikipedia
- derivative work: Rabanus Flavius (talk)

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bernadette_Soubirous-sarcophagus-2.jpg

Fig 3.2.1 Man Making an Oath

Designed by Luis Molinero / Freepik

https://www.freepik.com/free-photo/handsome-man-making-oath_1206375.htm

Fig 3.2.2 Herodias with the Head of St. John the Baptist

Artist: Paul Delaroche (1797-1856)

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Herodias_with_the_Head_of_St._John_the_Baptist_-_Paul_Delaroche_-_Wallraf-Richartz_Museum_-_Cologne_-_Germany_2017.jpg

Fig 3.3.1 People Going to Church on Sunday

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Halonen_Going_to_church.jpg

Fig 3.4.1 Caring for Aging Parents

Free photo from Pixabay.com.

<https://pixabay.com/illustrations/design-son-older-woman-mother-3062508/>

Fig 3.4.2 Mother Teaching her Daughter to Pray

Artist: Julius Schnorr van Carolsfeld (1794-1872)

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mother_and_Daughter_in_Prayer_MET_DP804006.jpg

Fig 3.5.1 Killing an innocent person is murder.

Copyright by Sweet Publishing, compiled by FreeBibleImages, CC BY-SA 3.0

<http://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/cain-abel/>

Fig 3.5.2 A Millstone Hanged about the Neck

An illustration in a Portuguese catechism of 1910

<http://www.sendarium.com/p/catecismo-ilustrado-de-1910.html>, #41

Fig 3.5.3 Christ Driving the Merchants out of the Temple

Artist: Antoine-Jean-Baptiste Thomas (1791-1833)

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Le_Christ_chassant_les_marchands_du_temple_-_Thomas.JPG

Fig 3.6.1 The Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 18 – 19)

Artist: Jacob Jacobsz, circa 1680

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sodom_and_Gomorrah_afire,_by_Jacob_Jacobsz._de_Wet_d._J.,_probably_Köln,_c._1680,_oil_on_canvas_-_Hessisches_Landesmuseum_Darmstadt_-_Darmstadt,_Germany_-_DSC01149.jpg

Fig 3.6.2 Some Emblems Used by Homosexuals

Free image from Needpix.com.

<https://www.needpix.com/photo/1011654/rainbow-homosexuality-before-marriage-same-sex-marriage-gay-gay-movement-wedding-homosexual>

Fig 3.7.1 Boys Stealing Apples

Artist: Karl Witkowski (1860-1910)

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Karl_Witkowski_-_Stealing_Apples.jpg

Fig 3.8.1 Revealing the Hidden Faults of Others by Gossiping is Sinful

From a Vintage Greeting Card, licensed by Isabel Santos Pilot, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/22864665@N06/15932276017/in/pool-vintagegreetingcards/>

Fig 3.9.1 Infidelity and Immodest Desires

Free Photo by Gerd Altmann from Pixabay.com

<https://pixabay.com/photos/woman-face-wall-view-eyes-228178/>

Fig 3.10.1 The Tenth Commandment

From CatholicTradition.org

<http://www.catholictradition.org/Children/commandment10.jpg>

Fig 3.11.1 An example dish during a day of abstinence

Free photo by Louis Hansel from Unsplash.com

https://unsplash.com/photos/mVZ_gjm_TOk